

Editorials & Comments

The American Way Wins

In what many thought would be a close vote, the "No Change" voters to preserve district representation won by a surprising 11,013 vote margin or nearly 2 to 1. To be more specific, district representation received 29,230 votes while the seven-member, at-large forces amassed only 18,217 votes.

It would appear that the vote returns indicate that Charlotte voters said that they no longer want the Chamber of Commerce - big business interests dominating local government. They were saying, too, that while district representation may not necessarily be a perfect form of government, it does allow Mr. Average Citizen the opportunity to have a more direct voice in his government.

Significantly, an analysis of the precinct voting shows that the call to return to an all at-large City Council was rejected by voters in 62 of the City's 87 precincts. Furthermore, all 25 of the precincts supporting returning to an all at-large Council were located in southeast Charlotte and 24 of the 25 were in Council districts 6 and 7.

This outcome means also that new political coalitions may have led to the margin of victory. We make this observation because historically black voters in the northwestern and the more affluent southeast Charlotte white voters have decided the outcome of elections. For example, in eight predominantly black precincts of 3,723 votes

cast, 3,515 or 94 percent voted to reject returning to an all at-large Council. On the other hand, and as noted, southeastern Charlotte voted the opposite way.

We have repeatedly noted, however, that the question of district representation is not a black versus white issue but rather is an economic issue. It is economic pure and simple by the fact that it costs substantially more money to run an at-large campaign for City Council than it does a district race. This fact alone denies most Charlotteans the opportunity to seek at-large seats on City Council and assure blacks and most whites a greater opportunity to hold a district seat or at least have a more direct say in who their representative will be.

Therefore, the American way - district representation - defeated the so-called Better Way - seven-member at-large plan and preserves the good government we have. Let us now get on with the business of practicing good government.

We must add a note of thanks to the leadership of Harvey Gantt, Sam Smith and others who led the fight to preserve district representation. They represent the kind of young, talented and progressive leadership that our community needs in these difficult times. Then, too, thank yourselves for being civic minded and alert enough for going to the polls to help preserve a tradition in the American way.

Economy Influences Bond Vote

Sandwiched between Governor Jim Hunt's plea to raise taxes for the state's highway program and President Ronald Reagan's address on his tax cut and high military expenditure economic plan, Charlotteans went to the polls and split their vote on nine bond issues.

Undoubtedly influenced by renewed awareness of the state of the economy, Charlotte voters endorsed \$30 million of the \$53.9 million bond package or 55 percent. They cast their votes in support of basic necessity items traditionally endorsed including street improvements (\$14.2 million), water and sewer improvements (\$10.6 million) and a Parks and Recreation facility (\$1.2 million). They also endorsed a \$4 million transit facility.

However, the voters rejected \$12 million for land acquisitions for a new Coliseum and a Performing Arts Center, they vetoed \$8 million for a parking facility and denied a request of \$10.4 million for a Mint Museum expansion program. These items were undoubtedly disapproved because the voters believe that this is not the time for speculative or culturally oriented unnecessary indebtedness.

Without a doubt Gov. Hunt's speech on highway improvement tax needs on the evening before the bond vote and the new media speculation of President Reagan's economic message to Congress and the American people the evening following. The bond vote had at least a psychological impact on how Charlotteans voted on the bonds. Undoubtedly, too, the lingering misunderstanding or assumption that private developer Henry Faison's downtown project would benefit from the parking deck facility led to its defeat.

While the failure to pass some of the bond issues may be a slight set back, it is not the end of the world nor the end of Charlotte's progress growth. The City of Charlotte will continue to move ahead toward its potential as one of the nation's great cities.

As the economy rebounds, as eventually it will, as private investment continues in our city and as renewed confidence in government emerges, the voters will re-think these and other issues necessary to move Charlotte ahead to new challenges and new greatness. The lost bond issues are just greater challenges in that quest for greatness.

Stop The Flight Of Capital From Black Communities.

BLACKS WHO THROUGH SLAVE LABOR BUILT THIS COUNTRY FOR OTHERS, SHOULD UNITE TO REBUILD OUR COMMUNITIES FOR THEMSELVES.

- POLITICAN " "
- BUSINESS MAN " "
- DOCTORS " "
- LAWYERS " "
- ARTISTS " "
- TEACHERS " "
- MINISTERS " "
- WORKERS " "
- SOCIAL WORKERS " "
- FRATERNAL GROUPS " "
- BLACK PRESS " "

Like It Really Is

Bored By Graphic Dirtiness

Not too long ago, an eastside group of "concerned citizens" sought to enlist my aid in getting a couple of those adult bookstores closed down. Admittedly, I was reluctant because I do not believe in wasting my time.

But when I suggested to these folks - many of them parents - that their efforts might result in nothing more than futility, they hit the ceiling!

"We all are aware of your great love for children, Mr. Ingram," their chairman began confidently, with one of those, "I gotcha now!" expressions on his face, "I believe you have nine of them, and even granted that your reluctance is based on the theory that adults ought to be able, as you say, to select their own reading material freely, would you allow your children to be exposed to this trash?"

I wound up asserting that when weird people frequented such places, picking at young girls and the like, I was solidly opposed. But when they wanted to close down such a place simply because it existed, they'd get no help from me.

It wasn't, I got the strong impression, about what was good for the children, but what would serve their moralist views. These people also seemed to display little faith in the training and character of their OWN offspring, after I did some verbal fencing with them for a bit.

During my youth, all my schoolmates -- and myself -- were exposed to the most pornographic pictures, books and dirty jokes around. We were not amused, we weren't shocked, and we were not corrupted.

We were simply bored by the graphic dirtiness, after the initial curiosity wore off. Children who are at all affected by that kind of thing are usually already the victims of a poor upbringing at home. If sex is portrayed as something dirty, cruel, contemptible, nasty, unnatural, or shamefully furtive, then children will respond to such attitudes by taking a pathological interest in the subject, pornography or not.

Of course, if any community wants to "protect" its children from smut, it has a perfect right to do so and I'll be right in there fighting to see that that right is not denied them. But that community ought not be surprised if their results are negligible.

Children brought up in an atmosphere of love and trust and decent values are not "corrupted" by dirty books or pictures. And the others are likely to wander into the ways of depravity no matter how vigilantly we may guard against it.

By the time a child is six-years-old, his basic at-

titudes have already been shaped. If these attitudes are not healthy and productive ones, he is going to look for other outlets, in sexual violence, in lying or stealing or skipping school. No police power or censorship power can be a substitute for the moral function of the parent and the family. The parents who are so angry and worried about pornography falling into the hands of their children are really expressing deep doubts or fears of their own effectiveness as parents.

When I shared this thought with that group of people they came down off the ceiling to suggest I be put away somewhere where my lunacy wouldn't contaminate others. But I told them I still thought they must've felt they had failed in some way, hoping that outside discipline would take up their slack. And I still feel this way, for the most part.

We cannot ask the schools, courts and police to do our job for us. Character is built only at home. It may be nurtured and cultivated elsewhere, but the foundation must be laid at home.

A rule in my household is that no one ought to be ashamed to discuss what God was not ashamed to create.

Character, decency and social responsibility begin there too -- or end there, so that the negative results spill over into the streets. Parenting certainly begins at home.

And the parents who is ignorant of what and where his or her duty is will be taught plenty by their child's misconduct about what they ought to have done, and where.

Affirmative Action

Reagan And Civil Rights

The irony of ironies about the attempted assassination of President Reagan was that if his budget cuts had gone through, the hospital he was rushed to after being shot probably would not have had adequate facilities and personnel to treat him!

But as Rev. Joseph Lowery of SCLC has stated about the President, "We're praying that he gets well, so we can give him more hell."

How true! Because, as has been said so often in the past, if this Administration's attacks on Black rights are allowed to go through, the Afro-American community will be in a comparable position to their brothers and sisters in South Africa.

Though busing has been reviled by many, Rev. Jesse Jackson's apt comment still rings true: "It's not the bus, it's us." Yet, despite the fact that if there are more science labs, language labs, computers, etc. in one school district, than it probably is imperative that there be busing if Black children are to receive an adequate education. Despite such incontrovertible facts, there are those among us -- including some who should know better -- who have been attacking this remedy for segregation with a vehement ferocity.

For example, Derrick Bell, who is Black and who supervised 300 cases involving desegregation while with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., has become a frequently quoted opponent of busing. Now dean of the University of Oregon Law School and perhaps tacking his sails to the prevailing winds, Bell, unfortunately, has been cited all too often by white racist critics in their attack against Black educational advancement.

These white racist critics have also been aided immeasurably by the latest maneuvers of the Reagan Administration. Two weeks after being elected, Reagan announced, "I happen to believe... that busing has been a failure." Secretary of Education T. H. Bell favors a federal law or constitutional amendment forbidding the Justice Department to do anything to require or promote busing. Bell has also stated that he was considering extending the deadlines for eight states to meet Federal desegregation requirements or face loss of federal funds. The eight states - South Carolina, Delaware, West Virginia, Alabama, Pennsylvania, Florida, Missouri and Kentucky -- have been found by federal officials to have "vestiges of segregation because some parts of their public higher education system still have mostly white or mostly Black students."

Taking their cue from the Reaganauts, the California Supreme Court has upheld the constitutionality of a state anti-busing amendment approved by the voters in late 1979. As a result, school officials are preparing to dismantle Los Angeles' bitterly opposed busing program -- and Black children will suffer as a result. Bobbi Fiedler, a right-wing Republican, used this emotionally charged issue to catapult herself into Congress and ousted liberal Democrat James Corman, after 20 years in the house.

Opponents of busing have ignored the many studies showing the benefits of this tool of desegregation. Robert L. Grain and Rita E. Mahard of the Rand Corp., a Washington think-tank, in a recent analysis demonstrated the value of busing.

From Capitol Hill

President Reagan Denies Equal Justice To The Poor

Alfreda L. Madison Special To The Post President Reagan's budget calls for zero funding for the Legal Services Corporation. Because of the need for such services, Representative Rodino, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee has introduced H.R. 2506 which will extend the Corporation. This bill asks congress for \$321.3 million for fiscal 1982 and for such a sum as is necessary for 1983.

Representative Kastnemeier, Chairman of the subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties and the Administration or Justice has been holding hearings on the Rodino Bill. Professor Abram Chayes of Harvard University Law School said, "The essence of our legal system is carved into the pediment of the Supreme Court Building; Equal Justice Under Law, and if Legal Services Corporation is abolished the idea of equal justice will be meaningless." He stated that since the lives of the disadvantaged are affected by government policies, their basic rights of



food, shelter and clothing are defined by litigation and the administrative regulations that implement them. The poor people in this country rely on lawyers to perform their legal services and their rights will be lost without these. Jack Greenberg, of Legal and Defense Fund of the NAACP testified that he highly favors H.R. 2506 and would like to see it amended to provide an inflation factor. He said that legal aid lawyers are able to resolve many problems without litigation. Social justice presupposes access to justice. For congress to

effect economics in government spending at the expense of needed legal services to the poor and of opportunities to escape poverty, will be damaging in unanticipated and immeasurable ways.

In response to the kinds of cases legal services should handle for the poor; class action suits, busing was mentioned. Mr. Greenberg said that legal corporations should not be limited in the types of bases. If a poor client has a busing case, legal corporations should handle it. Class action suits can be brought by the poor.

William Reece Smith Jr. President of the American Bar Association said that the Association not only strongly supports continuation of the Legal Services Corporation, but most important it is supporting the principle of equal justice. He stated that as a nation we pride ourselves on having a justice system in which every person, rich or poor is treated fairly. However, if our justice system works for the rich and not for the poor - they are not

"ensuring justice," and we cannot expect the citizenry to represent the law and legal system.

Mr. Smith said that the Reagan Administration's proposal to eliminate the legal services program denies poor citizens a voice when they are involved in legal disputes.

Representative John Conyers, speaking for the Congressional Black Caucus said this congressional group represents approximately 2,588,544 poor people who have been or are now Legal Service clients. He criticized the Administration's block grants to states for health and social services for the poor in civil matters. Reagan's proposal consolidates 40 categories into four block grants. None of these contain guidelines as to how these funds may be used. Conyers states that there is need for counsel to assure reasoned consideration of the indigents' claims in view of the personal and property interests at stake in legal disputes affecting the poor, such as threatened evictions, possible

loss of child custody, termination of substance public benefits; and repression of personal property.

In creating the Legal Service Corporation, congress declared: there is a need to provide equal access to the justice system in our nation, and to provide high quality legal assistance to those unable to afford it, providing legal service to those who face economic barrier to adequate legal counsel will serve the best ends of justice, the availability of legal service has reaffirmed faith in our government of laws.

It was brought out at these hearings that without specific federal fundings for legal services and federal guidelines for the block grants, since many problems of the poor involve public officials who make decisions about housing, income, health care and children, justice for the poor is in jeopardy.

President Reagan is as intent on abolishing federal legal assistance for the poor as he was during his governorship of California,

where his attempt failed. He called the legal service lawyers "ideological ambulance chasers."

It is hoped that congress will ignore the Reagan proposal and pass H.A. 2506.

New County Brochure Available

The Mecklenburg County Public Service and Information Department has published a new brochure about County government in Mecklenburg, and copies are available to the public free of charge.

Mecklenburg County government is responsible for providing a wide range of human services, including all of the local public health, education, welfare and mental health programs.



THE CHARLOTTE POST
 Second Class Postage No. 965500
 "THE PEOPLE'S NEWSPAPER"
 Established 1918
 Published Every Thursday
 by The Charlotte Post Publishing Co., Inc.
 1524 West Blvd., Charlotte, N.C. 28208
 Telephone (704) 376-0496
 Circulation 9,200

62 Years of Continuous Service

Bill Johnson...Editor, Publisher
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Second Class Postage No. 96550 Paid At
 Charlotte, N.C. under the Act of March 3, 1878

Member National Newspaper Publishers
 Association

North Carolina Black Publishers Association

Deadline for all news copy and photos is
 5 p.m. Monday. All photos and copy
 submitted become the property of the POST
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 Representative
 Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.
 2400 S. Michigan Ave. Chicago, Ill. 60616 Calumet 5-0200
 45 W. 45th St., Suite 1493 New York, N.Y. 10036 (212) 489-1220